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BURNING OF ROYALTON.

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A

MEMOIR

OF

ABIJAH HUTCHINSON,

A SOLDIER OF THE REVOLUTION.

BY HIS GRANDSON,
K. M. HUTCHINSON.

ROCHESTER:
WILLIAM ALLING, PRINTER.
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PREFACE.

Every thing relating to the history of our forefathers, is worthy of being preserved. And the biography of those individuals who lived in the days of our Revolution, are perused by us with great emotion and interest, because we are anxious to possess a knowledge of the minds and characters of those men who were actors in its trying scenes.

In perusing the lives of individuals of that period, for instance Washington, in admiring his generous principles and glorious destiny, what patriot does not feel himself pressed forward by invincible resolution in his heart, tn equal his patriotism and virtue. Yet the deeds of his devoted countrymen who acted upon the same theatre of life with himself, are equally conspicnous and noted for the devotional spirit of patriotism they evinced in staying the proud waves of British oppression, and command equally from us our highest expressions of gratitude, emulation, and esteem.

Many of the incidents of our Revolution have received, in addition to their inherent value, the polished air of romance and fiction, which has given them more the appearance of fabulous achievments than of real adventures. The story of many of the heroes of that eventful period, who have passed the threshhold of time "unknown and unsung," if given to the world, would surpass in interest the brightest productions of fictitious romance.

The subject of the following sketch, in the memorable and terrific contest for liberty which gave rise to our present national existence, bore in its dangers and privations a distinguished share, although not at any time noted by any great or brilliant display of military tactics. For narrations of this kind, who does not have a peculiar regard; and who does not feel his heart instinctively light up with patriotic fire, as he listens with riveted attention to some genuine old patriot who loves to "fight his battles over again in story?" It has been my peculiar fortune to be favored with the social intercourse of such an individual; and often has my youthful heart been so elated by his recitals, that I almost wish that war, with his shielded bristling front, would come again, and the wild savages' yell ring in my

ears as the sweetest music, that I might tell for what deeds of noble daring my heart was formed, and what a *hero* I was in other days. It is with a view to gratify the large circle of friends of Mr. H., who are very solicitous that the narrative should be written and published, that has induced me to undertake the task. In its performance it shall be my highest aim to introduce nothing but the plain, simple, and honest truth, believing that the approbation of every individual who may peruse it, will be more happily secured, than if I attempt to introduce any thing of an improbable or romantic nature; for truth, in whatever situation it is found to exert its influence, contains, to a virtuous mind, sufficient merit to rivet the attention and secure the approbation.

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GEN. ISRAEL PUTNAM.

BIOGRAPHY.

The subject of this sketch was born in Lebanon, Connecticut, July 4th, 1756. At a suitable age he was sent to a district-school, where he acquired a good common education; but according to his own statement, books were not his greatest friends. Hunting, his favorite employment, possessed greater attractions for him than the rugged paths of science. Yet this mode of life gave him a constitution better fitted to sustain the hardships he was called to endure in subsequent life, than the one he probably would have acquired in the school-room. About this time a strong friendship was formed between him and a young Indian whom President Wheelock was educating, intending him for the missionary field. From him he acquired many traits of the Indian character, which were of most esssential importance to him in his subsequent intercourse with the Indians, during his captivity. But little did he or his Indian friend imagine that they should ever meet in future life, under circumstances so far different from these, as the reader will find to be the case if he is possessed of sufficient patience to follow me thus far through the narrative. At the age of sixteen he was sent to learn the blacksmith's trade with a Mr. Nathan Hovey, who lived in Canada, a small town taken off from Old Lebanon. He continued in this employment, until April, 1775, the glorious year when first the spark of heaven-born Liberty was lit up in American soil.

The news was borne to him of the battle of Lexington while engaged at his work, and immediately with all the aspirations of an ardent temper, he threw down his hammer and determined to consecrate his services to the interest of his distressed country until her liberation was achieved. Without any claims which could give him the hope of receiving a commission, he presented himself at head-quarters, equipped in every way adequate for a private soldier. He enlisted; but, on account of his inferior size, being very small of his age, he was excluded from the ranks, and his

name stricken from the roll. This was a damper upon his fervent expectations of future distinction, yet something more would have been required to dispirit him or to avert him from his design. He requested his name might again be registered; but with the same unfortunate success. Upon his third application, however, he was more fortunate. The officers, noticing his intense zeal and determined resolution to follow the army, acceded to this expression of his desire, without any manifest reluctance; and he was accordingly mustered into a division of Gen. Putnam's brigade, commanded by Ensign Abner Robinson. That detachment to which Mr. H. was joined, were a newly-raised corps, consisting principally of farmers and mechanics, who knew nothing of the hard chances and trials of war; yet the blood of their countrymen had been spilled on the plain of Lexington, and they had cheerfully left their families and homes, and come with a determination to avenge their death. And they were not long allowed to be idle. Information being communicated of the arrival of British troops at Boston, the drums immediately "beat to arms," and the words "every soldier at his post," cast a gloom over the minds of this body of raw militia as they were preparing to enter upon the doubtful chances of military life; and many a stout heart beat throbbingly as they bade adieu to all they held dear or sacred on earth; and many an eye was lit up with the gleam of hope, but too soon to be covered with the film of death. Hastening with all possible despatch, the troops arrived at Bunker's Hill on the 17th of June, and were nearly the first to volley "death's leaden hail," quick and decisive into the ranks of the enemy. The terrible carnage which followed and the glorious victory which ultimately crowned the manly endeavors of the American soldiery, bear ample testimony of their undaunted bravery, and the heroic and intrepid spirit of their patriotism. After the consummation of the vicissitudes of this memorable day, the surviving portion of the army retreated across to Charleston Neck, and quartered at Cambridge.

Soon after arriving here Mr. H. was stationed as a sentinel upon the road, with strict orders to let no one pass, whether friend or foe, without showing his passport. He had not been in this situation, long before he saw coming, at no great distance a person mounted upon a black charger, whose appearance evidently bespoke him to be an officer of some distinction in the American army. Approaching with

the greatest familiarity, the officer addressed him. "My lad," said he, "are you the guard?" "I am, Sir." "I declare," continued he, "you have a fine gun there—let me examine it." So, without any hesitancy, he delivered up his gun for inspection. Having examined the lock and inquiring if it was loaded, the officer handed it back to him with these words: "My lad, you have betrayed your duty. Do you never again, if upon guard, deliver up your gun to any man, even as you now have done to General Washington himself." Then, showing his passport, he galloped away. Stung to the quick with this keen reproof, our hero resolved from that time to obey his orders to the letter. It was not long before he had a trial of this determination; for General Putnam, in a blustering sort of a way galloping up to him, inquired if General Washington had lately passed; and being answered in the affirmative, was passing on. "Stop," cried our sentinel; "your paper, Sir, or you pass not here while I am guard." Putnam, fumbling in his pockets, found, to his great dismay, that he had left it; and, informing the guard of his situation, and that he had business of pressing importance with Washington; and without any other ceremony, put spurs to his horse. "Stop," again cried the guard, "dismount, Sir, or you are a dead man." Finding there was no other alternative but to dismount, he did so; when our hero conducted him safe into the camp, where not only Washington, but *Put* himself highly extolled him for the course which he had taken.

Mr. H. remained here until the expiration of his time of enlistment, which was eight months, when he returned home. But to an individual of an active disposition, and one, too, whose appetite has been sharpened rather than gorged by the enthusiasm of the battle-field, pressed on also by the desire of sharing the laurels of victorious achievments, no greater punishment can be inflicted, than to be obliged to remain inactive while so great a field is spread out before him for immediate action. The American Revolution presented such a theatre for enterprise and heroism, and Mr. H. was anxious again to become an actor on its tragical stage. Having always had a great inclination for a seafaring life, he sought by every practical means in his power, to gratify his desire. At this time the ship O. Cromwell, commanded by Captain Timothy Parker, was fitted out for the privateering service by the State of Connecticut, on which he embarked, Nov. 1776, and set sail for the West Indies.

No event occured unusual to the career of a seaman's life, in this cruise ; and he accordingly returned with the rest of the ship's company in six months after setting sail. They had not been long in port, when Captain Parker determined again to try his fortunes upon the sea. They accordingly, on the 23d of March, spread their canvass to the breeze, and sailed again for the West Indies. It was about the middle of April, said Mr. H., that our gallant ship was rocking in a heavy surge, the only vestige left of the gale we had just encountered, but which had gradually died away into a perfect calm. The ship's crew were moving sluggishly about the deck, all lamenting the quiet stillness which reigned around them ; for, to a real sailor, nothing can be more annoying than to feel a deathlike stillness pervading the atmosphere, or to behold the sea with a smooth and glassy surface. Their spirits seem to partake of the general tranquillity of the scenery around them ; but they are awakened from their lassitude into life and activity, by the first whisperings of the breeze. Not long did time thus hang heavily on the crew of the O. Cromwell ; but something of more importance, however, sprang up, than a *gale*, to awaken into energy their languid spirits.

The Captain had been pacing the deck for some time, constantly surveying the horizon with his glass, from every part of the ship, when suddenly he settled down to a reclining posture, and gazed with marked attention at a dark speck that just skimmed the farthest point of the horizon. Approaching nearer, it increased in dimensions, and soon disclosed to the staring eyes of our crew, a fine British vessel, bearing the name of the Bristol. On her crimsoned flagstaff proudly waved the haughty Lion of England, who seemed to look down with disdain upon our ship. But in a short time it was satisfactorily illustrated that he whose strength and prowess was the motto and boast, in comparison with the then first belligerent nation on earth, was not invulnerable. Captain Parker bore down upon the Bristol, and poured into her a broadside, which was immediately returned. The action now became general. Quick and decisive were broadside after broadside exchanged between them, and dreadful was the slaughter they effected. Thick and fast fell their comrades around them, yet their fall was unheeded. Nought else engrossed their attention but the defeat of their enemy before them, whom fortune had favored with heavier ordnance and a greater number of men ; but had reserved

for *them* the sure harbinger of victory—a righteous cause and the bravest hearts to fight for it.

The battle was carried on with untiring vigor, for three hours and a half, when, to the great surprise and joy of all, the enemy struck. The O. Cromwell had 13 men killed and 27 wounded. The number slain on the Bristol were infinitely greater, but the correct number was not ascertained. In the latter part of the action Mr. Hutchinson was greatly disabled by receiving a wound on his leg below the knee, caused by a splinter flying against it, which was severed from the ship by a cannon-ball. From the effects of it he had never fully recovered. The Bristol was found to have on board, a wealthy merchant, his wife, and two daughters, who had a letter of *Marque*, and were destined from England to St. Kitts. She was of 620 tons burden. Captain Parker sent her into Boston as a prize.

The O. Cromwell needing cleaning, and some necessary repairs from injuries she had received during the late conflict with the Bristol, they steered for Charleston, South Carolina, for the purpose of refitting her. They remained here until they had recruited and repaired the ship, when they set sail again, on the 25th of July.

Nothing occurred that is worthy of notice, with the O. Cromwell, until about the middle of August, when they encountered a severe storm from off the Bahama Islands. The top-mast was swept away, and the ship at one time was so nearly under water, that the crew were obliged to lash themselves to the rigging, to prevent being washed overboard by the mountain-waves that swept over them at intervals, threatening at every moment to swallow up ship and crew, without any ceremony, into the raging deep. The storm at length abated; and by splicing their mast, and remedying other defects and injuries sufficiently, they ventured to steer for home without lying too at any nearer port to refit. On their way they fell in with a vessel that had been driven by the storm from St. Augustine, and was steering for New-York, where the British army were then lying. She had but a few men on board, and no commander; he and the rest of his crew being on shore when she was driven off. There were a number of large anchors and cables on board, beside three or four hundred casks of sea-biscuit, and five hundred bolts of top-sail duck. They made her a prize, and brought her safely into New-London.

Bidding a final adieu to the Captain and crew of the O.

Cromwell, he turned his steps homeward, where he arrived in a few days after his departure. He remained here with his friends, until March, 1780, when he went in company with a number of families, to Vermont, and with them commenced a settlement in Tunbridge, Orange county, on the East branch of White river. Mr. H. purchased a tract of land, on which he labored during the summer, making such improvements as he was able, until October following, when a party of 203 Indians and 7 tories, was sent from Canada to destroy Newbury, a town in Vermont, and to take revenge on one Whitcomb, who had been guilty of mortally wounding a British officer for the sake of obtaining his watch and sword. Nearing the place of their destination, they were met by a party of hunters, who informed them that the citizens of Newbury, by some means unknown to them, having heard of this expedition, had sent their women and children to a fortified place lower down, and had prepared themselves to give them a warm reception. This caused them to change their course to this settlement, which they attacked in the gray of the morning, on the 16th of October, 1780. The day before this had been one of great rejoicings, as a number of young men (and Mr. H. was of the company,) were intending to depart the following day for Connecticut, where they were to be married, and remain until spring before they returned.

No doubt the war-whoop of the Indian sounded fearfully in the ears of those who had laid themselves down that night in peace, and giving loose reins to their imaginations, had reveled in dreams of coming joy and happiness. Yet those halcyon imaginings of future bliss were suddenly changed into the sad reality of savage captivity. These few families who composed the settlement, were poor. They had left behind them the homes of their youth, to seek one in the wilderness, far away from many of their friends and relations, and all that they held dear in this world. They had travelled far through forests, uninhabited except by wild beasts, and had here at last planted their standard of improvement. Soon the forests echoed to the unwonted sound of their axes, and comfortable dwellings, as if by magic, sprang up from the trees that were fallen. Yet there was an enemy at hand, who soon was to break in upon the rising progress of this settlement—an enemy who, like the vengeful snake, sought to destroy his prey in a most unguarded moment. Innocence then has no security from harm, but shares with the guilty one common fate.

The Indians, having arrived at the settlement, with fiendish yells and very little ceremony, commenced splitting open the doors of the houses with their tomahawks, and dragging the helpless occupants from their beds, unmindful of their cries or entreaties. Here a sturdy Indian grappled Mr. H. by the throat while in bed, and with his tomahawk flourishing above his head, with a menacing voice commanded him to dress immediately; when he was closely pinioned with a strong cord which they had brought for this purpose. The savages, in plundering the houses, secured for themselves whatever was valuable or pleasing to their fancy. The looking glasses they saved; and one Indian was so delighted with a valuable plaid silk dress which Mrs. Curtis, the sister of Mr. Hutchinson, possessed, that he took it from her and hid it in his pack. But she, watching a favorable opportunity, boldly extricating it, took it away, and wrapped it around her waist under her other garments. But he, however, observing her, was so pleased with the trick, that he generously gave her back another dress which he had taken, as a present.

The savages appeared to be more desirous of destroying property and exercising a malignant disposition toward the settlers, than putting into requisition a more cruel one to the injury of their persons. The brother-in-law of Mr. H. possessed a very valuable grinding stone, which he had been at great cost and pains to procure. Yet this, on their being informed it was the only one in the place, the "ungrateful dogs" broke in pieces. They amused themselves, also, by tearing open the feather beds and throwing their contents into the air, and filling it with horrid laughter, as though that was the happiest time their whole life had ever witnessed. But the half-naked and terrified settlers might very appropriately exclaim with the frogs in one of L'Estrange's fables: "Although this may be sport for you, it is death to us." The savages were very humane and polite towards the women, not being desirous of capturing them; and much to their credit, they carried them clothes, as they stood trembling with fear outside the houses.

After burning the houses, and demolishing every thing that came in their way, also taking three prisoners, Mr. H., his brother John, and Mr. Joseph Havens, they started for Royalton, a village situated on the White river, a few miles below. They had not proceeded far on their way, before they espied two men crossing a piece of meadow-land, lying

adjacent to the stream. One of these they shot, but the other secreted himself so securely under a log that they did not discover him, although they passed over it several times in their search.

Hastening onward with all possible speed, leaving the dying man weltering in his blood, they at length arrived at Royalton. This place they also destroyed, sparing neither life nor property. They killed two men, Mr. Button and Pember, and took twenty more prisoners. But not satisfied with this, after wantonly destroying every thing they were able to, they re-crossed the river, leaving 21 houses together with their furniture, to be consumed in the flames. Among the houses that were destroyed was one belonging to a widow woman, Mrs. Handy, the mother of a stout, athletic lad, who was her only support and the solace of her declining years. She had guarded him with a mother's care, in his weakness ; and the comfortable house in which she lived, and the snug little farm in the rear, showed that she had labored to establish for him a goodly heritage. Yet she saw her dwelling laid in ruins, and, worse than all, her son, the jewel of her care and attention, become a victim to savage captivity. No sooner had the Indians started on their journey, than the almost frantic mother flew to the side of the river, and, plunging in, with great effort succeeded in gaining the opposite shore ; and, hastening onward as fast as muscle and limb could carry her, she soon regained the Indians, from whom, with all the eloquence of feeling in a mother's heart, she requested that her son might be liberated. She told them that he was not able to endure the fatigues of so long a journey ; that he certainly would die before he reached its termination. The Indians, struck with admiration at the boldness and zeal of her eloquence, hesitated not to deliver up to her the object of her solicitude. And such was the ascendency she had gained over their feelings, that all of her neighbors' children, also, which they had taken, at her desire were released. But, not satisfied with this, she made an effort to secure the liberation of the men ; but the Indians were inexorable. She, wishing to detain them as long as possible, in hopes that Captain House, who was stationed with a body of men some miles below, would hear of the attack and hasten to their rescue, requested the Indians to convey the lads back across the river. They, suspecting pursuit, continued on their journey ; but left, however, one of their company to perform the service she had

required of them; which he did, and was hastening to regain his companions, when the old heroine called to him and requested the like conveyance. The Indian laughed heartily at her desire; but he however returned, and, taking her upon his back, landed her safe upon the opposite shore. Then, re-crossing the river again, he gave a loud whoop and disappeared in the woods.

Intelligence was immediately conveyed to Captain House, who with his men hastened to pursue the "spoil-encumbered foe," and to rescue if possible the unfortunate prisoners. One of the Indians was killed, and others wounded. Here the savages killed a number of the prisoners, and sent a message back to the Americans that, in case of a farther pursuit, all the captives would be put to death. While they were deliberating as to the best course to pursue them, the Indians secured their retreat up the second branch of the river. Night pressing upon them, they encamped for the first time in the South part of Randolph, where two more of the prisoners were killed, viz.: Kneeland and Gibbs. The prisoners passed a sleepless, restless night.

The morning found them in an irritable mood; and, seeing two of their companions wantonly murdered without any apparent cause but to indulge their captors' barbarous thirst for blood, they could harbor no other thought but that a similar fate awaited them. These poor pedestrians were heavily laden with the spoils which had been taken; and their burdens added to the fatigues of the rugged road they were obliged to travel; and it was only by extraordinary effort that they were able to sustain its weight. The load which Mr. H. carried, consisted principally of looking glasses, which were bound to his back by means of cords and withes, the ponderous weight of which, after the third day, he was unable to bear. On the morning of this day, an Indian, observing his miserable condition, brought him a pint of clear rum, and insisted upon his drinking the whole of it, saying that it would make him strong. Mr. H. however refused, knowing that so large a quantity would make him drunk, and in that condition they would be obliged to leave him behind, and it was more than likely that they would kill him, fearing that he might return and thus betray their course. The savage, upon Mr. H. refusing to comply with his demand, endeavored, by placing the bottle at his month, to force its contents down him. But he still refusing, a severe struggle ensued between them, in which, his antagonist be-

ing the strongest, gained the ascendency. The brutal savage seized him with an iron grasp at the throat, as he lay beneath him, and raising high his glittering tomahawk, with the fire of revenge kindled in his eyes, and giving strength to every muscle, was about to bury in the brain of his victim the fatal weapon so often stained with the blood of the innocent, when his arm was suddenly arrested; but the weapon, as if anxious to perform the deed which its master was deprived of doing, cleft the air; yet its course was erring, and it sank deep into the earth, just escaping his head. Mr. H., opening his eyes, beheld, bent over him, the Indian friend of his former years, with whom he had spent many a happy hour in the shady groves of Old Lebanon. The friendly Indian severely reprimanded his companion for treating Mr. H. so harshly; he also relieved him of a part of his load, and gave him a good meal of victuals; and he, from that time, as well as the rest of the prisoners, shared equally with the Indians themselves. We see in this remarkable circumstance, an example of that noble trait of the Indian character, their never forgetting a favor, at however remote a period it might have been conferred upon them. Yet the lustre of this virtue is often dimmed by the spirit of bloody revenge, which excites them to many wanton outbreakings of bloody violence for the slightest and remotest provocation.

From this place they passed through Brookfield to Onion river, the course of which they followed to its disembogue-ment into lake Champlain. Taking here the canoes they had left, and following along the shore of the lake, thence down Sorelle river, they found themselves, nine days from their departure, in the city of Montreal. Here, the prisoners, being exchanged for eight dollars a head, were passed over into the hands of the British. By them they were conducted to a dark, stone prison, and made to subsist on nothing better than one pound of poor horse-beef and one pound of bread per day, for one whole year. Methinks that ye are startled at this, ye sons and daughters of refinement—ye who revel in the luxury of palaces, who dwell in the security of cities; and call it all a fable, a transient dream. O, how few of you are capable of forming any adequate conception of the severe toil and hardships that were endured, to secure to you the rights and privileges of *freedom* and *independence*. It is an observable fact, that the American people are fast losing that stern virtue and enterprise, so much the characteristic of their ancestors. Fashion has reared here many

of her fascinating temples, where thousands pay their humble devotion. Her enchanting spirit has corroded the finer feelings of many an enlightened soul; and caused those sentiments of attachment which were given to them for ennobling purposes, to lavish their superior excellence on useless finery. I blush to see so many of my young countrymen, possessed of reason and understanding, who have not yet learned the proper use and application of those ennobling faculties of the mind, which, if cultivated and directed in their proper channel, would buoy the young intellect up above the silly flattery of gay, ostentatious butterflies of fashion, and give it a taste for those things which are the proper food of a virtuous and well cultivated mind. But to return.

During the interval of this year, Mr. H. became almost wholly destitute of clothing, so that the severe coldness of the weather was the means of greatly enhancing his misery. To supply this deficiency in raiment, all that was given him was an old Indian blanket, of which he contrived by the aid of a wooden needle of his own manufacture, and the ravelings of his stockings, to make him, a complete suit. After the expiration of this year the prisoners were removed from Montreal up the river about 60 miles to Prison Island, for nearly another year.

In August, 1782, eighteen of the prisoners formed a resolution to make their escape, a purpose much easier formed than executed. But to men who were separated from all they held dear or sacred in this world, who were in the hands and at the disposal of an enraged enemy, there was no opposition but that would flee from before them, and no difficulties but that could be surmounted. With determined resolution to make their escape or perish in the attempt, they proceeded to put their determination into execution, by tearing up the floor of their cell, and with an old scalping knife, the only instrument in their possession, commenced digging their way to *Liberty*. And the hopes of treading

"The much loved shore they sighed to leave behind,"

gave them new life and energy for the performance of the task. The pickets being driven down to the depth of three feet, and situated as they were some 30 from their cell, it afforded a task of no ordinary difficulty to dig beyond them. They, however, commenced by loosening the dirt with their knife and stowing it away under the floor of the barracks. But finding it in a short time difficult to obtain air at so great a distance

from the surface, for the safety of the person digging, a rope was fastened to his feet; and after laboring until exhausted, he was pulled back by his companions at the mouth of the hole. Having cleansed himself in a tub of water prepared for the purpose, to prevent detection, another was stripped, ready to take his place.

They continued thus to prosecute their laborious work, night after night, until the 10th of September, when, at 12 o'clock, they broke the turf beyond the pickets, and heard the guard distinctly cry out, "*All is well.*" "That's the fact," said one of the company; "the dog speaks the truth now, if he never did before." The animated tone in which this was uttered, came very near rendering ineffectual all their past labors; for the guard at that moment stopped, as though some unusual noise had arrested his attention, and listened for some moments, to be sure he was not deceived. But finding all silent, he started forth again on his solitary round, as though nothing had happened to disturb him. After they had all crept carefully through the aperture they had made under the pickets, they hastened to the side of the river, where, fortunately for them, some drift logs had floated to the shore and lodged in the bushes. Of these they built a raft on which to cross to the South side of the river, by fastening them together with their blankets, which they tore in strips for this purpose. On this they embarked, and pushed boldly from shore. But finding their raft not sufficiently strong and steady to withstand the turbulent and rapid water of the river, they were obliged, instead of crossing, to float down with the current near the shore. They sailed thus quietly along for some distance from the Island, when they landed on the North side of the river. With all the stillness possible, they proceeded in search of canoes or some other water craft by which they might be able to cross to the other shore. But they were unsuccessful.

As yet the quiet repose of the night is undisturbed, and darkness still rules the earth. But a light appears in the East. The sun is about to disclose the transactions of the night; still, breathless silence reigns around. Yet, sudden as the lightning's vivid flash, the echo of the alarm-guns' "deep mouthed thunder" greet their listening ear. What feelings of anxious, painful suspense now rankles in those aching hearts! Are they again to return and plunge themselves into the gloomy caverns from which they had with so great difficulty escaped; or are they about to shake off, in

proud contempt, the shackles of lawless British imprisonment, and to pursue, unmolested, their homeward course to the land of their nativity? Follow me, reader, and see.

For fear of being discovered, they dare not stir, but lay concealed during the day in the woods. The following night they proceeded cautiously up the river, and discovered three canoes fastened to the shore. These they took, and effected by their means a safe landing on the South side of the river. Bright hopes began to cheer them once more; yet they were mingled with despair, when they considered that they were yet in an enemy's country, and about to enter a trackless forest without a pilot or compass to guide their wandering steps, and almost destitute also of the means of sustaining life. Yet there was no time to lose. A counsel was held among them, and it was agreed upon that they should divide themselves into six parties with three in each, and pursue different courses, concluding very reasonably that their pursuers would be more likely to discover their trail, if they kept in one body; and if overtaken, all would be obliged to suffer the penalty of their escape. Whereas, if they were divided, some might possibly be so fortunate as to reach home; and being so divided, they might assist and protect each other in their lonely wanderings. The two companions of Mr. H. were Mr. Hathaway and Mr. Stone. With but half a pound of meat a-piece, these distressed, disconsolate men set out on their perilous pedestrian wayfaring. They travelled on. Where night overtook them, there on the cold, damp ground they made their beds, and the blue canopy above them was their only covering.

The second day after their departure, Mr. Stone was taken ill, and at his request was left by the side of a brook. With him they left all the food they then possessed, and with hearts melting with affliction and sorrow, bade a melancholy adieu to their perishing companion. They pressed on in their perilous journey as fast as their fatigued limbs would carry them, until the third day after their departure from Mr. Stone, when the painful sensations of hunger began to lay hold upon them so powerfully that they were obliged to stop. They endeavored to alleviate the distressing pangs that continually gnawed upon their stomachs, by eating the buds of the bass-wood and the slippery-elm. But these seemed to arouse to a higher pitch, rather than to allay their present distress. They dug a few roots; but these, fearing that they were poisonous, they dared not to eat. A snake

or a frog at that moment, would have been a delicious morsel fit for an epicure, and one that would have created a new era in their famished existence.

Yet still they continued on their journey, although making but a creeping progress; and oftentimes they would return at night at the same place from which they had started in the morning, in consequence of becoming bewildered. Suffering from hunger and thirst, the blood was constantly oozing from their parched mouths and stomachs; and in this worn out and miserable condition they arrived on the Western shores of Lake Champlain, having been nine days on their journey, and not having tasted a mouthful of food wherewithal to allay their hunger, except a few roots which they were familiar with, during the whole time. Quenching their burning thirst with the waters of the lake, they reposed their weary limbs on its mossy banks, and, gazing upon its glassy surface, started back with astonishment at the frightful spsctacle of their emaciated and haggard images reflected there. Before them lay stretched the Eastern shore, teeming with rich plenty, and presenting a vast variety of delectable scenery. How tantalizing the sight must have been to those worn out wanderers; and doubly so, when they beheld individuals pursuing their daily avocations, and, as was actually the case, possessing the power of relieving them from their perilous condition, turn away with an ear that had not heard their cries, and an eye that had not been arrested by the demonstration of their distress, which they made to attract their attention. They hallooed, but their voices were not sufficiently loud to reach across the lake. They placed their tattered coats on poles, and hoisted them in the air. But all in vain. The silvery tide that ebbed and flowed at their feet, and the very fish themselves as they turned up their shiny sides and darted away through the water, seemed to mock their misery. Mr. H. was so emaciated on account of his sufferings, that he was able to encompass his body with his hands. Finding all their efforts ineffectual, they sank back upon their grassy beds and giving up all as lost, prepared themselves for that fate which seemed inevitable. Wan despair had settled upon their spirits, and extinguished the last flickering ray of inspiring hope.

At this critical juncture, when death stared them in the face, a British scouting party chanced to be passing in boats along the shore of the lake, which by the goodly hand of fortune was directed to land at the identical spot where they

were lying; and so weak were they when they arrived, as scarcely to be able to raise their heads or speak. All possible attention was paid them by the British company, who took them on board, and gave them such nourishment as was befitting their famished condition. By slow degrees their strength of body and mind returned; and for a time, as the freshening breeze wafted their vessel merrily along the broad bosom of the lake, their drooping spirits seemed to revive, and to partake of the general brightness, life, and gaiety with which they were surrounded. Yet soon the dreadful reality of their returning once more to throw themselves into that gloomy prison, and to renew their intolerable captivity, cast a dark, impenetrable gloom over their spirits, which all the lively and gay scenes around them could not dispel.

In course of time they arrived at Montreal, where their fearful forebodings of a renewal of their captivity was but too plainly realized. They were treated, however, kindly, and every attention paid them becoming their condition, to restore to them their healths. They were in this situation until peace was declared, when they were carried around in a cartel-ship to Boston, and exchanged as prisoners of war.

It was with the greatest delight and most sincere gratitude to God, that Mr. H. found himself again in the possession of liberty, the enjoyment of which he had so long been deprived. Bidding adieu to his companion, Mr. Hathaway, with a light heart he started homeward, believing that he should meet with friends on the way, who would welcome him and administer to his wants, and that his toils were now finally ended. But, alas! how soon was he mistaken! Feeling hungry, he called at a house and begged for something to eat to appease the loud calls of the demon of hunger. But the smallest bit was refused him; and being addressed by the base title of an "old British dog," by the inmates, he was ordered to leave the house. Affectingly he related to them the early part he had taken in the Revolution—all the dangers and privations he had endured while a prisoner in the hands of the British, that he was now returning to his native home, poor and penniless, with a constitution wasted by want and suffering; but all this could not melt to sympathy hearts so hard with cold and haughty pride as those whom he was addressing.

Forced to leave the house without receiving a morsel, he passed by a stoop where sat a swill-pail filled with crusts of bread and other offal; from the table of which he ate a

little, and passed on. Although his emaciated and haggard appearance must have been revolting to decency, dressed as he was in the motley garb of the old Indian blanket, which he had himself manufactured, and which was now perfectly in rags, not having been cleansed or mended for the two years which he had worn it; yet he was a human being, and as such, whether Britain or not, had claims upon the charity of his fellow-man. Retiring from the city, he sat down upon a stone; and that heart which had long borne cheerfully a weight of affliction and misfortune seldom suffered by human nature, now swollen with indignation and sorrow, as he recalled to mind the scene he had just witnessed; and no longer being able to restrain its deep, unutterable emotion, gave full vent to its gushing grief. Oh! Humanity, in those days of severe trial and affliction, whither hadst thou fled? But now, is there a heart so cold, so hard, as not to cherish feelings of sympathy and benevolence for the unfortunate? If there are such, let them seek for habitations in the dens and caves of mountains, far from society; for they are unfit to live and associate with their fellow-men. While the big tears of sorrow were coursing their way down his care-worn cheeks, a noise like the feeble cry of an infant behind him, arrested his attention. Turning around, he discovered wrapped in a blanket, a young infant about five days old. Taking it in his arms, he carried it to the first public house, where he exchanged it, giving it his name for what he could eat. Many years after this, while travelling through Massachusetts, he called at this inn; but in the robust and intelligent young man he saw there, he could not be made to believe he beheld the weak and tender infant which many years before had done him so great a service, until he was assured of the fact, and that he still bore his name.

Having remained here until he felt the blood of health coursing in his veins and his spirits revived, he started onward for Connecticut, where he arrived in course of time at his brother Hezekiah's, who still resided there. He remained here until March following, when neglected Hymen performed that service which, under many painful though past existing circumstances, he was obliged to delay until the present time. With his wife he started for Vermont. On arriving there, to his infinite surprise and joy he found all his friends and companions who had separated from him on the shores of the St. Lawrence, quietly settled down again; but they had given up all hopes of ever more seeing him,

concluding, from his long absence, that he must have perished by hunger in the woods, or been torn in pieces by wild beasts. But nothing could exceed his astonishment and exultation, upon greeting, as though risen from the dead, his companion, Mr. Stone, who, after being left at the brook before mentioned, had endeavored to grope his way back, solitary and alone, through the woods, until he arrived here completely worn out.

Mr. H. lived in Vermont, enjoying life peacefully and happily for half a century, when he moved with his only son, James Hutchinson, in January, 1835, to Geneseo, Livingston county, N. Y., where he has since lived. He had arrived at the age of 86, when he died; possessed a strong constitution; and although enfeebled by age, was yet in the full possession of all the faculties of his mind. He received a pension from the Government of eighty dollars per year, for his services during the Revolution. He was the youngest of the family of four, who are all living in Tunbridge, Orange county, Vermont; and these, as well as his ancestors, are all remarkable for their longevity. His mother lived until she was 95; and he states that the last time he visited his grandmother, she was able, at the age of 100, to spin a run of cotton a day, besides doing her house-work. She died at the advanced age of 105.

But Mr. H., having at length arrived at a ripe old age, departed this life at his residence in Geneseo, on the 11th of February, 1843. Age and infirmity had long detained him in retirement, previous to his death; yet the admiration of the wise and the affection of the good accompanied him; and as he was at length called to lay his head on the pillow of death, a spark of secret joy seemed kindled in his breast as he turned a retrospective glance over the past, and could behold nothing which could dim the brightness of his declining years; but that all his actions combined to render him the homage due to departing merit—that the veneration which had accompanied him while living, was expressed with solemn earnestness when he was called to follow those fellow-companions in the sacred cause of freedom, of whom nearly all had gone before him.

It was a degree of satisfaction to him to beguile the tedious hours of retirement in which it was his inclination to dwell, by studying the sacred volume, to which a greater share of his time was devoted; and at appropriate seasons, with his *promising* flock of grandchildren around him, it was pleasing

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both to him and to us, stored as his mind was with Revolutionary lore, to relate incidents connected with that period of our history, appropriately denominated as the "time which tried men's souls," some heart-stirring, I assure you, and others highly pleasing and instructive. The readiness with which he called to mind every minute occurrence, even as far back as childhood, showed him to be possessed of a tenacious memory; and also how instructive is the example and worthy of imitation, when we see a man full of years and honor descend to the grave with the full assurance of ending a life "well spent." The infirmities of old age want the reflections of a well-spent youth. These are the only means capable of supporting us in the last stage of our pilgrimage. The early impressions of childhood, however imperceptibly by us may have been stamped upon our memories, come stealing back to us through the long list of years that are past, cheering us with those bright visions whose very remembrance sends the blood thrilling through our veins, enlivening us long after the stern realities of life have quenched the flushings of the eye, and time has wrought deep furrows upon the forehead.

Such, reader, is the history of a man, the sternness of whose soul in the cause of freedom, has been tried in the service of his country, the virtue and benevolence of whom has manifested itself in private life. He died as he had always lived, a sincere *friend*, a *patriot*, and a *Christian*.

Peace shall secure his ashes keep,
And stretch her wings above his bed;
Fair Virtue at his tomb shall weep,
And Freedom mourn her honored dead.

Sleep, Warrior, sleep! gallant of yore,
Yet sleep within your dreamless grave:
The blast of war shall rouse no more
The slumbering ashes of the brave.

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